

Mark 14:1-11 – December 6, 2015

We come in Mark 14 to the final section of Mark's Gospel. Everything has been pointing to this point and in this final section, everything centers on the death and resurrection of Christ. Each of the Gospels dedicate more time to the final week of Jesus life than any other portion of His time on Earth. The Gospels slow down dramatically as we are given in-depth details of Jesus' actions during this last week. It is a time of great sorrow for Jesus. He becomes increasing isolated as He prepares for the cross. He is betrayed by one of His inner circle and abandon by those close to Him. He is ultimately tried and executed without those who have followed Him by His side.

Of course, because of my commitment to preach through books of the Bible and because I do not break for holidays on the calendar, it may seem odd to be at the end of Jesus life during the time we are celebrating the beginning of His life. However, nothing could be further from the truth. We must always remember during this season of the year that the gift of Christmas is not the baby in the manger, but the victory won on Calvary's cross. God would have been cruel had He sent us His perfect Son, the exact image of what we would be were we without sin, and yet given us no pathway to return to Him. Had Christ simply been born but not offered Himself up for us, we would be lost and without hope. We could not have celebrated the birth of Christ had He never given us reason to celebrate with His offer of redemption.

This morning we will look at the extravagant love that was shown by Christ. This final section of Mark's Gospel is about the ultimate demonstration of Christ's love. However, extravagant love is not always appreciated. It has become ignored in our

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culture. It is under appreciated in the church. We must seek to understand God's extravagant love and learn to appreciate, celebrate it, and demonstrate the extravagant love shown to us by Christ.

I. **Extravagant love is ignored by hard hearts** (vv. 1-2)

- a. Jesus has shown extravagant love to everyone that He has encountered. Even those who He has confronted have been witness to His love. However, those with hard hearts have nothing but disdain and hate for Jesus and everything He has done. While He has offered compassion and healing, they are secretly trying to figure out how they can kill Him. They are but two days from the feast where they celebrate God's deliverance and yet their focus is on hate and murder.
- b. We must guard our hearts in this area. We do must not ignore God's extravagant love. It is a sign of a hard heart. Those with hard hearts seek to end extravagant love. It makes them uncomfortable. They do not understand it. It makes their "faith" seem cheap or lesser. Rather than celebrate extravagant love, they fight against it. We must not be like that. When we see God showing extravagant love to someone or someone showing it to Christ, we must celebrate with joyful hearts.

II. **It is honorable to pour extravagant love on Christ** (vv.3-9)

- a. ***There is no gift too valuable for Christ*** (v. 3) – the woman anoints Jesus with an alabaster flask of expensive ointment. This was

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something that was very expensive. We find out it was a year's salary to buy it. She gives it all away in a moment. It did not matter to her how much it cost, she was giving it to Jesus and that was the important thing.

b. *Extravagant love is often disrespected* (vv. 4-5) – Some of Jesus' disciples are not pleased. They feel as if the ointment has been wasted. We know from John's Gospel that Judas was one of these men. He did not care about the poor at all. He was a man who was influenced by Satan. His intentions were never pure. The disciples who do not like this action scold the woman for what she has done.

c. *Extravagant love directed toward Christ is not soon forgotten* (vv. 6-9) – They do not find Jesus scolding here, however. Jesus is not pleased with their actions. He calls her actions beautiful. While the poor would always be present and they would have countless opportunities to minister to the poor. She carried out an action that would not always be available to her. He would soon go to the cross and she anointed Him before He went to the cross. Her actions would be remembered always.

III. Extravagant love stands in contrast to greed (vv. 4-5; 10-11)

a. Giving to the poor was a ruse. It sounds good, but it was not best. It reminds us of when Jesus visited Mary and Martha. Martha was busy

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serving, while Mary sat at Jesus' feet listening to Him teach. Martha was frustrated because she wanted Mary to help. Mary, however, **has chosen the good portion** (Lk 10:42) according to Jesus. We also know from John's Gospel that Judas simply wanted to keep the money for himself and was upset when the money "wasted" by anointing Jesus.

- i. We must take stock of our motivations. We can easily lose focus of the main things because of our greed. We can make lesser things a priority and ignore the opportunities we have been given to show extravagant love to Christ. So many churches are really concerned about good things, but not fully committed to the idea of pouring extravagant love on Christ.
- b. Judas ignores the love of Christ (vv. 10-11) – He has witnessed Jesus' amazing life and ministry. He has witnessed the woman's unyielding love for Christ in anointing His head with oil. However, none of this was sufficient. He sold Jesus to the chief priests. He was greedy. We know from John's gospel that Judas would steal from the poor. His greed overruled the extravagant love that he had available to him from Christ.

IV. Challenge – have you committed yourself to showing extravagant love to Christ? We often think about the extravagant love He has shown us, but do we

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consider that we are called to show Him extravagant love? We often show mediocre love. We squeak by. In fact, too many of us get upset with people who show extravagant love. We do not really like people completely sold who pour extravagant love on Christ. We however, must be those people. We can no longer settle for lesser things. We can no longer be satisfied getting by in our “faith.” We must richly pour love on our Savior and His Kingdom.